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THE MUSTER.

The rules of service require every two months a muster of all the forces. It is preceded by a review and inspection. Yesterday was muster-day. No one was allowed to leave the post that day. All were required to be present; the Colonel, the other field officers and staff, all the company officers, and every private. Every one attached to the command must be *shown* (this is the meaning of *muster*) or accounted for. If a man is on the sick list he must be visited in the hospital, and if absent on furlough or special duty he must be vouched for. All this particularity is required, because pay-day comes after muster-day, and the pay-roll is made out from the muster-roll. At pay-day every one is to receive his due, and to make this sure every one must be verified to be what he claims to be, and no one is to be allowed as a substitute for another. The form of proceeding is to break the battalion into companies, open ranks, and then the Colonel inspects, critically, every man's arms, equipments, and clothes. Then comes the muster. From a prepared roll of each company, and in the presence of all, the name of every man is called. Each soldier, as he is called, answers in a loud tone, *Here!* and brings his musket to an *order*. No one can be overlooked, for if his name has not been called he stands in the ranks with his gun at *support*, while all the others are at an *order*. This makes him conspicuous. No one can answer twice, or for another, because his musket once brought down must remain so. No one can escape by being on guard, or in the hospital, for the guard-house and the hospital are both visited. When all this is done, the Colonel certifies the correctness of the muster to the Paymaster, and then every man receives what is due to him. My office required me to be beside the Colonel, as he called out and verified every man in the whole regiment. Each company, as it is mustered, marches from the parade ground to its

quarters. I thought the scene was a suggestive one. As we presented ourselves before each company, the officers were in front with their swords drawn, and the ranks of the company presented an unbroken array of glittering guns. As the calling of the roll proceeded, the swords of the officers were sheathed, each man answered, *Here!* and one by one the muskets were brought to the ground—not *in regular order, however*, for the roll was made out alphabetically, while the men were ranked according to size. Sometimes a musket went down on the extreme right, and sometimes on the extreme left or the centre—now in the front rank, and now in the rear rank. Presently, the muskets held on high were few and appeared scattered here and there along the ranks—then only one or two were left, and, finally, every one had been brought to the ground.

And so it is, I said to myself, with every generation of men. It stands at first an unbroken rank, with burnished arms upheld. Death begins to call the roll, and every one must answer to his name. It is one here, and one there, and he answers, and his musket comes to the earth. Presently, the generation rank looks thin and ragged, but the calling goes on, and the answering, and the grounding of the arms. Three only are left! two!! one!!! The last man answers, the last musket is down, the generation is all mustered. None escape. The guard are called in, the hospital is visited. Even the black drummer has answered to his name, and is mustered too. All are mustered. And after one company is mustered it marches off to its quarters, and another company is mustered and marches off to quarters, until the whole regiment is mustered and marched off, and the parade ground that in the morning was so full and bustling, by noon is empty and still. And thus generation after generation is mustered, and passes off to the house prepared for all the living, and in due time this camp of Earth, with its teeming millions, will be mustered and in quarters. High and low, rich and poor, white and black—all, all! Every one in turn must hear the call, to which he must answer, *Here!* He must be verified, *and he will be*. And all this great muster, what is it for? Fellow-soldier, it is for another

day, greater still, the *great* pay-day! "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Cor. i, 15. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man according to their works." Rev. xx, 11, 12, 13. For God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness: indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil: of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, and honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good: to the Jew first and also to the Gentiles; for there is no respect of persons with God."

Do not fear, fellow-soldier; we shall certainly receive our due at the great pay-day. As we cannot be missed at the muster, so we shall not be forgotten at pay-day.

But does this assurance give you comfort, or does it awaken dread? If you receive what is your due, what will it be? Alas for us, for *all* of us, if we receive what is our due. But see now the wonderful grace and goodness of God through Jesus Christ. We deserve nothing but eternal death. But Christ hath died for us. We have no righteousness of our own, but "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who, is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Do these words of scripture seem unintelligible to your understanding? or, if you understand them, do they fail to make any impression on your heart? Hear, then, this word of the Lord: "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrightness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

To give you this spiritual understanding is the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Saviour saith: "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."

And now, are you inclined to enquire how you may receive this work of the Spirit on your heart? Hear again the words of Jesus: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And again: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

This, then, is the sum of all: "Fear not, only believe." And so when thy summons comes, trusting in the atonement of the Saviour, thou canst at the last great muster humbly but firmly answer, *Here!* and, pleading the merits of the same Saviour, assuredly expect to receive from the great Paymaster the reward of a crown and palm of victory, and an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

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